

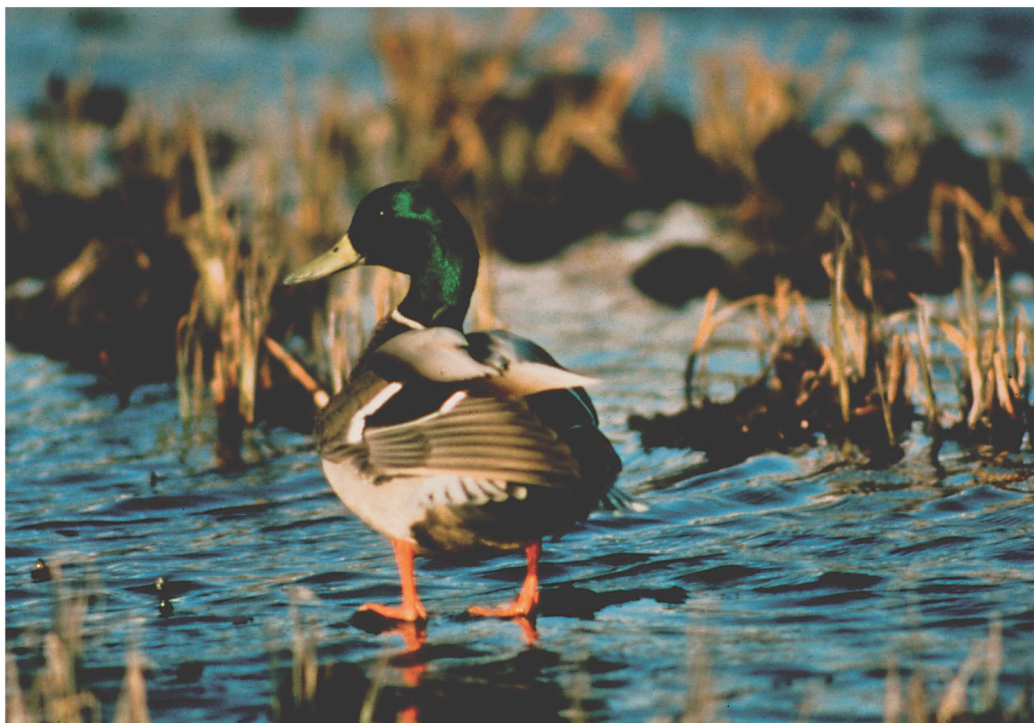
# Westchester Lagoon

## Anchorage Wildlife Viewing Hot Spots



### directions

Driving north or south on Minnesota Avenue, the wetlands of Westchester Lagoon frame the road on either side. The lagoon is accessible from Spenard road and West 19th Avenue to the Chester Creek greenbelt and trails. Westchester Lagoon is accessible from Spenard Road and West 19th Avenue to Chester Creek greenbelt and trails. Take Spenard Road north from its intersection with Fireweed Lane toward downtown Anchorage. The parking area is on your left as you cross the Campbell Creek bridge. Heading south from downtown, take "L" Street and turn right on 15th Avenue, then drive to the end of the road.



Mallards are easily recognized by their shiny green head and neck with contrasting yellow bill.

### tips & cautions

Grebes are adept at carrying their babies on their backs as they meander in and out of lakes and marshes.

Muskrats can be found throughout Southcentral Alaska in areas with muskegs, freshwater lakes, rivers, and riparian habitats and coastal wetlands.

Baby red-necked grebes often climb on mom's back for free rides across ponds and lakes.



Westchester Lagoon, near downtown Anchorage, provides an excellent respite from urban hustle and bustle. Waterfowl abound, moose and small mammals forage, and views of the Chugach Mountains can be spectacular, particularly at sunset.

Spring offers excellent bird watching as migrating shorebirds, waterfowl, and terrestrial species seek out the marshy ponds, coastal waters and streams surrounding Westchester Lagoon.

In April and May, grebes will make you chuckle with their persistent and nasal "Nerr! Nerr!" Mallards nest among the sedges and grasses on the shore. American widgeons swim side-by-side with families of geese. You will thank the flocks of swallows swooping across the skies overhead with extraordinary aerial skill, as they help keep the air free of mosquitoes. On April evenings, you may hear what sounds like a chorus of ducks hiding among the cattails. These elusive singers are actually mate-seeking wood frogs, croaking their eerie staccato call.

An exciting place for birders is the Fish Creek Estuary, located on the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail to the west of Westchester Lagoon and the southern railroad underpass. The mudflats attract waterfowl and shorebirds, including an occasional species far outside of its normal range. Check the local Audubon Society Bird Alert for a recorded message with recent sightings.

Winter wildlife watchers can follow tracks of small mammals like snowshoe hares, voles, muskrats, and red foxes near the wooded areas on the east side of the lagoon.

### contacts & resources

**Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:**

[www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov](http://www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov)

**Municipality of Anchorage:**

[www.anchorage.ci.org](http://www.anchorage.ci.org)